News

Vaccination Week in the Americas celebrates 15 years
Alba Maria Ropero, Elizabeth Thrush, and PAHO Vaccination week team

This year the countries and territories of the Americas and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) will celebrate the 15th Vaccination Week in the Americas from 22 to 29 April.

The slogan for 2017’s campaign is “#GetVax to celebrate a healthy tomorrow,” encouraging people and their families to get vaccinated today and enjoy good health tomorrow, given that vaccines offer protection against highly contagious, debilitating and potentially deadly diseases. The characters of Sesame Street illustrate the 2017 campaign poster.

Countries and territories in the Region aim to vaccinate more than 60 million people against a range of diseases. Brazil alone will be targeting 50 million in its yearly massive influenza campaign. Other vaccination campaigns will target against rubella, measles, diphtheria, mumps, whooping cough, neonatal tetanus, yellow fever, rotavirus, bacterial pneumonia and the human papilloma virus (HPV).

“During these past 15 years, we have demonstrated that vaccination is one of the most powerful strategies to prevent diseases and save lives,” PAHO’s Director Carissa F. Etienne stated. “PAHO is committed to continue working closely with the countries to vaccinate the entire population and facilitate the introduction of new vaccines at affordable prices,” she added.

In 2015, rubella and congenital rubella syndrome were eliminated in the Region and in 2016, country efforts helped achieve measles elimination. Vaccination against these diseases continues to help minimize the risk of importing these diseases into a country in the Region. Furthermore, millions of people have been vaccinated to keep the western hemisphere free of polio for 25 years.

Since 2000, new vaccines against rotavirus, pneumococcus, and HPV have been introduced in countries and territories of the Region. Currently, 34 countries and territories vaccinate against pneumococcus, 20 against rotavirus, and 24 against HPV.

These achievements have been possible thanks to the dedication of thousands of health workers, who played a key role to reach everyone in their communities and take vaccines to the most vulnerable populations and hard-to-reach zones.

LINKS:

Vaccination Week in the Americas 2017
Video – Message from PAHO’s Director
Video – Celebrities support VWA
Poster Sesame Street and others

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In February and March 2017, Liberia organized two rounds of oral polio campaigns as part of the regional efforts to permanently stop the disease following the detection of four cases of wild polio virus in security-compromised areas in Borno state, north-eastern Nigeria. Based on the LQAS (Lot Quality Assurance Survey), a rapid survey method to assess the quality of vaccination coverage, increased quality has been registered in Liberia with, for instance, 88 unvaccinated children out of 900 were checked during the February 2017 round compared to only 36 during the March 2017 round with the same denominator.

Instrumental to this success are the 2,220 mobilizers in Liberia known as the “general Community Health Volunteers” (gCHVs) deployed in all 15 counties of the country. In preparation for the vaccination exercise, they conduct house-to-house mobilization and awareness creation. During the immunization days they are paired with vaccinators to ensure that everyone understands the benefits of vaccination and accepts the vaccination of their children.

In addition to use of the classic town criers, radio jingles and IEC materials such as campaign posters and banners positioned in strategic locations, the country made a number of innovations worth mention. For instance, in the Lofa County, located in Northern Liberia close to Guinea, jingles were recorded on mobile phones for social mobilizers in order to attract children and caregivers and encouraged them to take the vaccines. In the Sinoe County, located in the South Eastern part of Liberia, a dancing competition between kids was used as a strategy to capture missed children.

The third round of the polio campaign is planned to take place in October 2017 in Liberia. The country is slowly recovering from the severe Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) that hit the country three years ago. A total of 25,515 people were affected, while the EVD claimed the lives of 10,572 patients, many of whom were health workers.

**Launch of the RIPOST Project - To support surveillance of infectious diseases and response in West Africa**

Alice Henry-Tessier, Agence de Médicine Préventive

On 11 March 2017, Agence de Médecine Préventive (AMP) signed a partnership agreement with the West African Health Organization (WAHO) for the RIPOST project (“Réseau des Instituts Nationaux de Santé Publique d'Afrique de l'Ouest”), funded through the financial agreement signed between the Agence française de Développement (AFD) and WAHO on 22 February 2017.

Following the signing, a ceremony was organized on 3 April 2017 by WAHO, AMP and their partners to launch RIPOST under the high patronage of the Minister of Health of Côte d'Ivoire, Dr Raymond Goudou Coffie. Between 3-5 April 2017, Dr Xavier Crespin, managing director of WAHO, and the stakeholders formalized the launch of RIPOST by presenting the details of the project, a planning meeting and the activities for 2017.

Financed by AFD and the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development, the project’s objective is to strengthen surveillance systems by improving public health capacity to control outbreaks in West Africa, specifically in Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Niger, and Togo.

AMP, as head of a group of international operators, will provide WAHO and the partner countries with technical assistance to consolidate public health professionals’ capacities in field epidemiology, as well as support social and community mobility to prevent and control outbreaks. The group of international operators includes: l’Institut de santé publique, d’épidémiologie et de développement (ISPED) de l’université de Bordeaux; l'agence Santé publique France; the International Association of National Public Health Institutes (IANPHI); l’Institut de recherche pour le développement (IRD), and Solidarité Thérapeutique et Initiatives pour la Santé (SOLTHIS).
MSF launches online platform to engage with Pfizer and GSK individual investors
Francois Servranckx, Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF)

On Thursday 20 April 2017, MSF launched YourStockYourVoice, an innovative online platform enabling people to know whether they have investments in Pfizer and GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) through their retirement plans (401k in the US) or savings.

For the past few years, MSF has mobilized public support around the world to encourage Pfizer and GSK – the only manufacturers of pneumococcal vaccine (PCV) - to reduce the price of the vaccine to five dollars per child (for all three doses) in all developing countries. In September and November 2016, GSK and Pfizer finally agreed to reduce the price of the vaccine to a bit more than 9 dollars per child (current lowest global price) for humanitarian organizations like MSF. This was a step in the right direction, but millions of children are still not protected against deadly pneumonia in middle income countries like Jordan, Thailand or the Philippines because the two companies keep the price artificially high.

Companies like Pfizer and GSK are accountable to their shareholders, but many people are not aware that they have investments in Pfizer and GSK through their mutual funds or retirement plan. This is why we have developed a tool to make it easy for people to discover if they hold investments in these two companies and give them the power to demand lower pneumonia vaccine prices.

Please try it out at this link and spread the news.

Past Meetings/Workshops

PAHO’s Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on Vaccine-Preventable Diseases holds ad-hoc virtual meeting

Cara Janusz and Cuauhtemoc Ruiz Matus, PAHO, Washington DC
Location: Washington DC, USA
Date: 10 March 2017
Participants: PAHO TAG Members and PAHO Immunization Unit Secretariat
Purpose: 1) Revise and discuss the IPV supply constraints and recommendations for countries 2) Review yellow fever outbreak update in Brasil 3) Prepare for regional TAG scheduled for 12-14 July 2017 in Panama City, Panama.
Details: PAHO convened its regional Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on Vaccine-preventable diseases (VPDs) on March 10. The ad-hoc virtual meeting was attended by the full TAG membership and members of the PAHO immunization secretariat. TAG members, under the leadership of Dr. Peter Figueroa (TAG chair), set out to review and discuss the implications and response to the global IPV supply constraint. The secretariat shared updates on the current IPV supply available, different scenarios that the Region will face should the supply constraint continue and discussed the scientific basis for administration of fractional doses of IPV. As a secondary objective of the emergency ad-hoc meeting, the TAG reviewed the situation of yellow fever in Brasil and the regional and country response.

TAG released recommendations on the use of IPV and considerations around the ongoing outbreak of yellow fever in Brasil to guide Member States in the PAHO Region in their strategies at country-level.

The full report will be available online shortly.
The training workshop on vaccine safety communication in the Western Pacific region

Ananda Amarasinghe and Sergey Diorditsa, WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific

Location: Manila, Philippines

Date: 21-23 March 2017

Participants: 27 participants from 12 countries: Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Republic of Korea, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Philippine, and Viet Nam. Participants were from the national immunization programme (NIP), staff responsible for pharmacovigilance at National Regulatory Authority (NRA), and staff in charge of immunization-related communication responses.

Purpose: To update and build capacity of senior officials from NIP and NRA to address vaccine safety issues in their countries by sharing best practices and reviewing WHO recommendations and available tools and guidance.

Details: A number of countries in the Western Pacific Region (WPR) have experienced immunization safety events (AEFIs) or perceptions of safety events, resulting in the spread of vaccine safety concerns both among health care providers and communities. Effective and open communication of evidence-based information about the importance of vaccination and the safety of specific vaccines to the public, as well as to health care providers and decision-makers, is crucial for public confidence. The workshop was facilitated by both international communication experts and the communication and immunization team from WHO/HQ and WPRO.

The workshop was designed with six plenary sessions and three group work sessions. Plenary sessions were focused on communication concepts, AEFI surveillance related communication issues, building communication capacity among health care providers, stakeholder advocacy, and communications with parents, public, and social/electronic/printed media.

Furthermore, this is the first time that the newly developed WHO vaccine safety communication e-library was introduced. During the group work sessions, the e-library was demonstrated and participants shown how to search for upload documents.

Participants acknowledged that it is important to establish a comprehensive national communication plan. A core component of this is to build and maintain the capacity of immunization staff at national and sub-national level in addressing vaccine safety issues, both to proactively maintain confidence in the programme, and to reactive effectively to crises or events. At the end, all participating countries drafted a work plan for vaccine safety communication activities in 2017-2018.
Effective Vaccine Management study tour: China delegation visit the UNICEF Supply Division

Shuyan Zuo, WHO China, Robert Scherpber, UNICEF China and Xiaojun Wang, UNICEF RO Bangkok

Location: Copenhagen, Denmark

Date: 21-23 March 2017


Purpose: To learn from the experiences of Effective Vaccine Supply Chain Management from UNICEF Supply Division (SD) based on its work in managing long term EPI vaccine supply to most developing countries in the world; learn about vaccine management issues and experiences on new vaccine introduction; and share vaccine certification and management policies from China, and discuss cooperation mechanisms for the future.

Details: China is establishing proper multi-institutional collaborating mechanisms and systematic tools for vaccine forecasts, financial estimates for local vaccine needs, vaccine production plans, price negotiations, and the digital tracking of vaccine supply and distribution. China is also promoting a China/Africa collaboration, where supplies produced in China are being made available to a host of countries in Africa.

During the three day visit, the delegation was briefed on the Chinese vaccine registration regulations, the State Council guidelines on updates to vaccine circulation and management laws, vaccines from China to the global market, vaccine production, planning, procurement, distribution and management, and considerations for new vaccines introduction. UNICEF SD introduced the UNICEF vaccine procurement process, vaccine planning and forecasting methods, the mechanism for vaccine purchasing, price negotiation, and contracting, procurement procedures for new vaccine (Hib and PCV) introduction into EPI and possible interim solutions, and an overview of supply chain management. In the end, the Chinese delegation and UNICEF SD discussed the action plans for enhancing China’s vaccine supply chain management system, new vaccine (e.g., Hib, PCV) introduction plans for China’s EPI programme, and Chinese vaccines for the global market through prequalification.
GAPIII auditors training workshop on poliovirus containment

Shuyan Zuo, WHO China and Nicoletta Previsani, WHO Geneva

Location: Kunming, China

Date: 10-14 April 2017

Participants: 30 nominees from China Food and Drug Administration (CFDA) and provincial Drug, National Health Family Planning Commission, China CDC and provincial CDCs who are responsible for the validation of polio essential facilities (PEFs) for IPV production, quality assurance, wild poliovirus (WPV) diagnostic and reference functions, and three observers attended the workshop.

Purpose: To clarify containment timelines, requirements (e.g., biorisk management system, biosafety and biosecurity management system principles and concepts), and expectations as stipulated in GAPIII; to clarify roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, assessment and certification mechanism as described in the new GAPIII Containment Certification Scheme (CCS); and to provide opportunities for discussions.

Details: The 68th World Health Assembly resolution, WHA68.3, sought commitment from the Member States to implement an appropriate containment of type 2 WPV and Sabin poliovirus in poliovirus-essential facilities (PEF). China is making efforts to complete an inventory of facilities that contain poliovirus, risk elimination in non-PEFs through destruction or transfer of the poliovirus to PEFs, and certification of GAPIII compliance.

To ensure a globally harmonized approach for the certification of PEFs against the implementation of GAPIII in China, the GAPIII auditors’ training workshop was convened from 10-14 April 2017 in the Kunming Yunnan province, China. The methodology used included presentations on CCS and GAPIII in plenary sessions, and group discussion on the current challenges in relation to the CCS implementation in country. The course was concluded by qualification tests.

It was highlighted that making functional the national authority for containment (NAC) is most critical for successfully completing poliovirus containment. NAC needs competent experts, formative procedures for enhancing expertise, sufficient NAC members, term of references, no conflicts of interest, penalty decisions for non-conformity against GAPIII, dedicated time for NACs auditing PEFs and communication with global certification commission (GCC), and resources committed to achieving the target goal.
Resources

Summary Tables of WHO Routine Immunization Recommendations
Tracey Goodman, WHO Headquarters

The Summary Tables of WHO Routine Immunization Recommendations have been updated. The revisions include the following:

- Tetanus: NEW WHO Position Paper – February 2017 (including revised recommendations on booster schedule)
- Measles: Revised to reflect the October 2016 SAGE Meeting recommendations removing the coverage criteria for MCV2 introduction. The new Measles Vaccines Position Paper will be published in the WER on 28 April 2017.
- HPV: Revised to reflect the October 2016 SAGE Meeting recommendations on target age 9-14 years, and multi-age cohort vaccination. The new HPV Position Paper will be published in the WER on 12 May 2017.

The latest versions (March 2017) of the Summary Tables (available in both FRENCH and ENGLISH) can be downloaded from the WHO website. As these tables are updated several times each year, it is always best to go to the website for the most recent version.

A User’s Guide to the Summary Tables is available in English and in French. This short guide has been developed as a companion piece to help orientate users of the summary tables.

What are the purposes of this guide?

- To raise awareness that the full spectrum of WHO recommendations for routine immunization are available in four summary tables.
- To explain how the summary tables can be used at country level to review and possibly modify a national immunization schedule so that it has greater impact and efficiency.
- To highlight practical and operational issues that country decision-makers should consider when making a change to the national immunization schedule.

Launched this month: Vaccine journal special issue on immunization supply chains
Heidi Lasher, PATH

PATH is pleased to announce “Building Next Generation Immunization Supply Chains” a special edition of the Vaccine journal which brings together evidence from global experts in 31 articles representing decades of work by country governments, implementing partners, and donors to improve immunization supply chains (iSC). The articles address the impact of iSC on vaccine coverage, current challenges, and successful pilots, promising ideas and innovations, and upstream solutions that can all help mitigate these challenges. Guest editors of the journal include Benjamin Schreiber (UNICEF), Bruce Lee (Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health), and Raja Rao (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation).

Compiled in this way for the first time, the evidence presented in the special edition will serve as a ready reference for supply chain practitioners, underscore the importance of iSC performance for all partners in vaccine discovery and delivery, and help elevate performance improvements onto the priority agendas of global, regional, and country level stakeholders.

To support the special edition and to tell the story of how strong immunization supply chains help vaccinate more kids and save more lives, PATH developed an accompanying digital feature: Connecting the Dots: How to get vaccines to more kids. The feature is designed with animated illustrations and social media friendly content to help build awareness for this important aspect of immunization programmes. We invite you to check it out and share it with your networks using the social media toolkit below.

What can you do?
Learn More
- Visit Connecting the Dots: How to get vaccines to more kids
- Read Building Next Generation Immunization Supply Chains
- Share on social media: http://pathisc.nptoolkit.org/
## Calendar

### 2017

#### May

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8-19</td>
<td>Capacity building workshop on Data quality review, Immunization information system, data quality improvement and revised survey methodology for 22 remaining Gavi eligible countries (back to back English and French)</td>
<td>Kigali, Rwanda</td>
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<tr>
<td>18-31</td>
<td>Executive Board and 70th World Health Assembly</td>
<td>Geneva, Switzerland</td>
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<td>23-25</td>
<td>AFRO East and South Regional Working Group</td>
<td>Maputo, Mozambique</td>
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<td>23-25</td>
<td>Training of consultants and partners on the updated WHO strategy to reduce Missed Opportunities for Vaccination (MOVs)</td>
<td>Harare, Zimbabwe</td>
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<td>30-June</td>
<td>IVIR Advisory Committee meeting</td>
<td>Geneva, Switzerland</td>
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#### June

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<tr>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>RTAG Meeting</td>
<td>Brazzaville, Congo</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Africa Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Committee (ARICC) Meeting with immunization partners</td>
<td>Brazzaville, Congo</td>
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<td>12-16</td>
<td>WPRO Regional Technical Advisory Group meeting</td>
<td>Manila, Philippines</td>
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<td>12-16</td>
<td>SEARO Regional Technical Advisory Group meeting</td>
<td>Delhi, India</td>
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<tr>
<td>13-23</td>
<td>Capacity building workshop for consultants to support countries on data quality review and Immunization information system including data quality improvement plans (back to back English and French)</td>
<td>Nairobi, Kenya</td>
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<td>23-24</td>
<td>Fifth Measles Virus mini symposium</td>
<td>Rochester, MN USA</td>
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<td>27-29</td>
<td>Fifteenth Global Measles and Rubella Laboratory Network Meeting</td>
<td>Geneva, Switzerland</td>
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#### July

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<tr>
<td>12-14</td>
<td>Regional Technical Advisory Group meeting</td>
<td>Panama City, Panama</td>
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#### September

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<tr>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>Measles &amp; Rubella Initiative partners’ meeting</td>
<td>Washington DC, USA</td>
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<tr>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>AFRO Central EPI Managers' meeting</td>
<td>Malabo, Equatorial Guinea</td>
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#### October

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<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>Fifteenth TechNet Conference</td>
<td>Lisbon, Portugal</td>
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<tr>
<td>17-19</td>
<td>Meeting of the Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE) on Immunization</td>
<td>Geneva, Switzerland</td>
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<tr>
<td>23-25</td>
<td>Polio committee meeting</td>
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#### November

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<tr>
<td>13-17</td>
<td>Global Rotavirus and IB-VPD Surveillance Network Meetings</td>
<td>Geneva, Switzerland</td>
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#### December

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<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>AFRO RITAG Meeting</td>
<td>Johannesburg, South Africa</td>
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## Links

### Organizations and Initiatives

- American Red Cross
  - Child Survival
- Agence de Médecine Préventive
- Africhol
- EpivacPlus
- LOGIVAC Project
- National Immunization Technical Advisory Groups Resource Center
- SIVAC

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
  - Polio
  - Global Vaccines and Immunization

- Johns Hopkins
  - International Vaccine Access Center
  - VIEW-hub

- JSI
  - IMMUNIZATION basics
  - Immunization Center
  - Maternal and Child Health Integrated Program (MCHIP)
  - Publications and Resources
  - Universal Immunization through Improving Family Health Services (UI-FHS) Project in Ethiopia

- PAHO
  - ProVac Initiative

- PATH
  - Vaccine Resource Library
  - Rotavirus Vaccine Access and Delivery
  - Malaria Vaccine Initiative
  - Meningitis Vaccine Project
  - RHO Cervical Cancer

### WHO Regional Websites

- Routine Immunization and New Vaccines (AFRO)
- Immunization (PAHO)
- Vaccine-preventable diseases and immunization (EMRO)
- Vaccines and immunization (EURO)
- Immunization (SEARO)
- Immunization (WPRO)

- Gavi Programme Bulletin (Gavi)

### Newsletters

- Immunization Monthly update in the African Region (AFRO)
- Immunization Newsletter (PAHO)
- The Civil Society Dose (GAVI CSO Constituency)
- TechNet Digest
- RotaFlash (PATH)
- Vaccine Delivery Research Digest (Uni of Washington)
- Gavi Programme Bulletin (Gavi)
- The Pneumonia Newsletter (Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health)